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ABSTRACT

This paper was intended to be read to a class or group of people who will in turn respond to the directions given in the paper. It is an attempt to merge the affective and cognitive experiences of literature in order to provide a more meaningful experience while studying J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy, "The Lord of the Rings." The directions are to listen with the mind and senses and to flow with whatever instructions are given. At various times the participants are asked to participate in literature activities that involve walking, talking, feeling, thinking, touching, tasting, and smelling. (LL)

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THE LORD OF THE RINGS

Affective Approaches to Teaching Literature

Presented to the

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This paper is written as a "speech paper." It should be imagined, as you read it, that you are making a speech to a group of people and that they are responding to your directions. Give plenty of time for people to move and to respond to one another. Pacing is important so be prepared to drop out parts if time is fleeting. The dropout parts should come from the middle and not the opening or closing statements.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS

Affective Approaches to Teaching Literature

Listen to yourself. What do you hear? Do you hear the sound of a different drummer? Each of us has the capacity to be a different drummer. We can learn to listen to our own drum and to march to the beat and to enjoy the experience of life. One way is through literature. One way is introducing affective experiences into our teaching of literature and merging it with the "study of." Merging the affective and cognitive experiences brings the literature into focus and relates to you and your life what that experience means. Listen to yourself.

"Three Rings for the Eleven-Kings under the sky,
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.
One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie."

This verse is from J. R. R. Tolkien's delightful and fantastic trilogy THE LORD OF THE RINGS. This trilogy is a fantasy. Fantasy is a mask for reality. That

which we term "fantasy" is a reflection of the inner man of the writer and is, in turn, a part of ourselves. Fantasy is what we imagine. We imagine psychologically and we call it projection. We imagine creatively and new things are born and our feet touch the ground with the gentlest of steps. We merge these processes in the teaching of literature and a whole new world of meaning opens up to us. Call it "An Affective Approach to Literature."

We can merge our cognitive and affective spheres, the polarities of our learning, and go inside Tolkien's stories. Go with me now on a trip into mankind's unique ability of imagination. We can take a look at ourselves and see if we can find anything new. We can let inhibitors go and see if we can flow with what happens. I am going to ask you to listen with your mind and senses and to flow with whatever instructions I give you. We will take an affective and imaginary journey through Tolkien's trilogy. It will require that you walk, talk, feel, think, touch, taste, smell, and experience life and literature in many ways--some unusual.

Our books are Tolkien's THE LORD OF THE RINGS. There is a beginning and end to everything. As this course, this speech, has its beginning, so will it have its end. The magic Ring had its beginning and end, as did the Fellowship.

Please stand and move away from your chairs. Move around and look at people. Do not talk. Do not touch. Look at one another. Make eye contact. Look and listen. Form circles of nine. Any nine. Move around until you find a circle of nine. Look at one another. Are you imagining what they are like or what they are thinking? You are a ring. You have a beginning and you will have an end. What is the significance of this ring? What is the significance of any ring? All of you touch hands. Keep your hands touching so that your circle is complete.

The quest began when Frodo, an unassuming Hobbit, felt the shadows of the

past fall across his life. The past, he felt, was somehow directing his future. He was not master of his fate.

One person in your circle turn to the person on your right and tell that person what shadow lies between you and what you seek in life. Can you allow yourself to state one shadow that falls across your life? Each of you make a statement and pass it around the circle until it comes back to you.

Frodo was given control of the magic Ring, the evil Ring, the one Ring, the Ring that was granted invisibility. But, with each use he lost more control of himself and the Ring gained more power over him. Evil always exacts its price.

Frodo was given the task of destroying the Ring. But, he must take the Ring across many lands to the place of its creation, the place where all evil dwelled, and there drop it into the force of its birth, the volcano Mount Doom. Why Frodo? Innocence must always take the most hazardous quests. Frodo is the innocent, the Pogo of Middle Earth, the one destined to carry the fate of the world in his hands.

We have a rich fantasy life. These are affective experiences coming out of the experiences of our daily lives. Teaching fantasy affectively is entering the literature and matching affective experiences.

There were eight on the quest with Frodo. Nine personalities in all to set that which is good against the evil of the magic Ring and its master. Nine good souls set out against the strength of the evil of the world.

Move about until you form new groups of nine. Stand in circles of nine. Any nine. Stand in a circle. Look at the others in your ring. Join your hands together. Move close together. Move closer. Move back. Struggle with one another but don't let go of your hands. Drop your hands. One person turn to the person on your right until you see that person's eyes. Say to

that person, "I need you." Pass it around your circle. Close your eyes and listen.

We all live in caves and all of us go through periods of darkness and terror. Bilbo Baggins found the magic Ring in the depths of a mountain where he faced its guardian, Gollum, and through use of the Ring escaped. Gandalf, the white wizard, was killed in the fight with the Balrog in the depths of Mount Moira. Working his way into Mordor, Frodo went into the depths of a cave and was agonizingly wounded by the dreaded sting of the monster, Shelob. We all live in caves and all of us go through periods of darkness and terror.

Imagine you are crossing a field. Walking toward mountains. The day is almost gone and you are looking for shelter. In the side of the mountain ahead of you is the dark mouth of a cave. You approach the cave. Walk into the blackness. What happens to you? What do you see? How do you feel? Come back from the cave. Come back to here. Open your eyes. Look into the dark caves of each person of your group. Look into their eyes. Tell your fellow members of the quest what happened to you in the cave but do it in silence. Listen to yourself.

Frodo met many strange creatures in the quest. Tolkien tells us of Frodo's experiences with dragons and Orcs, of elves and goblins and barrow-wights and trees that walk. Imagine, trees that walk in the shadows and keep watch on all the trees. Trees that drink of the essence of life and help man in his quest for existence, and punish those who would harm nature.

Move away from your group. Be alone. In silence become the tree of your choice. Stand as if you were that tree. Now move as if you were that tree. Walk as that tree might walk. Encounter other trees. Plant your roots. Listen to yourself.

The quest of Frodo took many turns and many roads. He crossed mountains,

swam river, mucked through swamps, worked his way through dense forests, and in great apprehension crossed open fields.

Take the hand of someone near you. Walk in silence with that person. Walk slowly around the room. Stop and look at one another. Tell each other what it is that you seek. Close your eyes and turn toward the sound of my voice. Listen to yourself.

Hear the sound of my voice. Listen to the sounds that you hear when you read Tolkien's books.

Hear the sound of a brook in the forest of Fangorn.

Hear the sound of a stream in the depths of Mirkwood.

Hear the cry of the Nazgul as it sweeps through heavens darkening the light with its evil.

Hear the pleasant sound of people.

Hear the people silently cry aloud. Hear individuals pledge themselves to hear the cries and to act upon them.

Listen to the voices that you hear all day in every way from one pole to another. The voice of Saruman in his tower will be heard as he lures people to his will. Listen to Saruman as his voice speaks from mighty Orthanc. "Come to me. Follow my will." The words cannot be remembered but the voice is compelling. Today, in all our world, there are those who listen unwarily. They hear the soft voice of Saruman in all his disguises, whispering, urging. They hear and what they hear is that help means ruin and saving means slaying.

Faramir spoke to Gollum and told him that there are locked doors and closed windows in the mind. There are dark rooms in the mind. How do we explore the dark rooms of the mind? What barriers loom between us? What lies in front of us on the road to Mordor? On the road to letting sunlight into the darkness of the mind there are barriers.

Look at the inside of your left eyelid. See the place where you are now. See yourself standing there. Now look at the inner part of your right eyelid. See yourself being what you would like to be. See what you would like to gain. See what you seek in life. Draw an imaginary line from the left eyelid to the right. Along that line see all the barriers that exist between where you are now and where you would like to be. See yourself overcoming those barriers. Slowly open your eyes as the sun comes up in the morning.

Samwise, the courageous friend and companion of Frodo was greatly responsible for the success of the quest as was the Elvish princess, Galadriel. In the depths of despair, in the depths of the dark mountains surrounding Mordor, when the quest was a thread close to failure, Sam picked up the gift of the Elvish princess that they had taken with them. He held it aloft and from its depths shone the silver radiance of the purest and brightest star. Sam held it aloft and it shone and he chanted the words that he did not know but which came from the sacred distances of time and through his mind to the world that threatened him.

I have written the words on this board. Focus your eyes on these Elvish words that Samwise chanted. "Aiya Earendil Elenion Ancalima!" See them filling your self with the joy of overcoming obstacles and barriers that exist in your life toward your personal quest. Let your heart and mind be filled with joy. Now let us chant these words together. Chant them joyously. Let them sound their way from here to the world and let them push the evil back from us. "Aiya Earendil Elnion Ancalima!" Again. "Aiya Earendil Elenion Ancalima!" Now let us whisper those same words together. "Aiya Earendil Elnion Ancalima!" When all other lights have failed.

Frodo felt that he was not large enough. That he could not resist the power of the Ring as he moved closer to Mount Doom and the end of the quest.

The Ring's power grew, became more fell, and he felt the vast and ominous threat of evil as the Ring tempted him.

What would good be if evil did not exist? Frodo came to the end of his quest. He stood on the edge of Mount Doom and found, indeed, that he was not large enough. "I will not do this deed!", he heard himself cry. Then, Gollum, the creature of night who had followed Frodo all the way in the hopes of stealing the Ring, bit Frodo's finger off that held the Ring and in the fighting slipped and fell into Mount Doom. Frodo is reminded that it was once said that even Gollum may have something yet to do. There is good, or good can come from, the sense of evil. Out of the mud grows a lotus. If this were not so, what makes us spend our few hours on earth writing and teaching and trying to find beauty, truth, love, and values in literature and passing them on to those who follow us?

Affective experiences are inherent in all literature, whether it is classic, science fiction, or fantasy. Literature is life and life is literature. How can we teach it as a thing? It is your life, my life, our lives. There can be a balance between that which is cognitive and that which is affective. Let it merge. Call it confluence.

In the end, the wounds and troubles of Frodo came to claim their due. Frodo said then, "The Shire has been saved, but not for me. Come now, ride with me." And he passed into the Blue Havens.

In silence, rise and walk about the room. Make eye contact with each person that you pass. Now touch each one you pass and say aloud to them, "Come now, ride with me."

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